

Information Released under Freedom of Information Act

Subject: Equal pay review information

Date Released: 11 December 2007

Summary of request: The enquirer requested copies of any reviews carried out within the last 5 years; details of what action had been taken in light of the review and what plans are there to undertake a further review.

Information released:

a) A copy of Companies House's Equal Pay Audit for 2003 is attached and there is summary of it on our website at <http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/about/policyDocuments/EqualPay.pdf> . This was the last review undertaken but a further Equal Pay Audit is due to be completed in December 2007. The 2003 report does not state any individuals' names but does mention specific pay. We would therefore appreciate it if the information is not used in any way that might lead to an individual being identified. The 2003 report is out of date and therefore archived.

b) In the attached equal pay audit for 2003 you will see in section 7.1 the Action Plan for Companies House. There were 2 actions 'Stage one' and 'Stage two'

Stage One: to formulate an equal pay policy that is agreed with the Trade Union and staff and disseminated to all.

An 'Equal Pay Policy' has been compiled but as yet has not been scrutinised by the trade union or disseminated to staff. We have discussed on many occasions pay issues with the trade union and they have been reasonably content with how we operate and that our policies and pay structures are robust and non discriminatory.

Stage Two: we should take the following action:

- *continue to monitor equality in pay on an annual basis;*

This is completed as part of the work done on the annual pay award and bonuses where we analyse progression and movements. As we also run our own Payroll system and end of month validation checks are completed to identify any pay anomalies

- *look more closely at other aspects of discrimination in pay i.e. disability, ethnic minorities and age;*

This is covered under our 'Diversity umbrella' and regular reports are produced.

- *equality check our grading and recruitment systems and be sure there is no hidden discrimination mechanism;*

Our grading system is based on JEGS (Civil Service bespoke software) and full assessments are completed where new posts are created. The Civil Service Commission undertook a Recruitment Audit in the 2006/2007 financial year.

- *consider what action might be needed to redress the under representation of women within Band F;*

Our senior management structure has changed significantly over the last few years. We are now looking to introduce more formal policies and procedures for talent spotting and management, career mapping and succession planning to ensure that all employees are given the same opportunities.

- *ensure the PDR system is not biased against women, part timers, those who have had a career break, or other minorities;*

Since the issue of the report the PDR has been revised and current work will recommend further changes and is focussed on performance against set objectives and future development.

- *ensure that our promotion system does not contain any hidden bias against the categories above;*

Our promotion system is under constant scrutiny by employees, the trade union and senior management. and

- *action taken needs to conform with the Cabinet Office Guidance for conducting equal pay reviews.*

We always take account of central guidelines and attend appropriate seminars to fully understand the latest thinking and case law.

In terms of our pay system we should:

- *ensure that over time, the system reduces the number of people above the target rate and who are on personal maximums;*

We now only have a handful of staff who are above the target rate and the majority of these are due to movement out of the IT function to a more generalist position with a lower target rate and individual's being put on 'mark time'.

- *equality check any new pay proposal before the remit is sent to the DTI.*

In proposing any new pay systems Companies House will, as in the past, take every precaution to ensure that there is no hidden bias resulting from changes.

Our current system has already addressed most of the issues that result in equal pay disputes in that we have a target rate based on competitive market rates that everyone can aspire to within a reasonable time. There are no overlaps and those above the target rate are not given consolidated increases.

c) A further Equal Pay Audit is due to be completed in December 2007.